

Planning, Research, & Development

Department Highlights:

- **Neighborhood's First Seminars continue this spring:**
Seminar : May 17, 2004
Time: 6:00 PM
Place: 3rd Floor Conference Room, City Hall
Subject: Capital Improvement Program
Seminar: June 21, 2004
Time: 6:00 PM
Place: 3rd Floor Conference Room, City Hall
Subject: Transportation Planning
- **Texas Chapter of the American Planning Association will Conduct a Training Seminar in El Paso:**
Date and Time: May 14, 2004, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Location: 9241 Socorro Road, Tigua Pueblo Tribal Council Chambers
Subject: Workshop for Planning Commissioners, Elected Officials and Staff
For additional information contact V. Rosales, 541-4633
- **Building and Zoning Advisory Committee: Latest Discussion:**
Building and Technical Subcommittee A: Building and Construction Code
May 3, 2004, 5th Floor Conference Room, 3:00 PM
General Business Subcommittee B: Business Taxes and Licenses
April 29, 2004, 5th Floor Conference Room, 10:00 AM
Zoning Subcommittee D: Landscaping Ordinance
April 28, 2004, 2nd Floor Conference Room, 3:00 PM
Zoning Uses and Technical Standards Subcommittee G: Uses / Districts /
Supplementary Use Regulations
May 4, 2004, 2nd Floor Conference Room, 2:30 PM
- **Land Development Review Accomplishments:**
Zoning Cases Finalized: 18 Approved
Special Permits Finalized: 3 Approved
Detailed Site Plans Finalized: 6 Approved
Subdivisions Recorded: 18
- **What's coming up Next Quarter?**
Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation RFP (Details Inside!)
American Planning Association Audio Conference Training Session
Date / Time: May 26, 2004, 2:00 PM
Place: 2nd Floor Conference Room, City Hall
Subject: Suburban Place Making
Thoroughfares in Review: Arterial #1, Stanton, Riverbend, Billy the Kid,
and Gomez-Redd Connection.

Director's Perspective:

It has been a lively spring for the Planning, Research and Development Department. We have been working on improving public access to the planning process with our outreach efforts through the Neighborhoods First and Neighborhoods Matter programs, and improved service within City Hall. Efficiency in processing applications, along with clarity of information is paramount to our success. We are reviewing and improving our applications to reflect plain language everyone can understand.

We have completed some important documents that are available to anyone who would like to have a copy. The Chihuahuita Neighborhood Plan was approved by City Council in March 2004. Also, the Northwest Upper Valley Plan was approved by City Council in January 2004 and has been an effective tool in guiding development and growth through several rezoning cases.

It is my hope to meet with all of our readers to discuss our plans for the future. My office door is always open, come by for a visit anytime. Also, please visit the City of El Paso website at www.elpasotexas.gov for up to date information on meeting times, agendas and upcoming events.

George G. Sarmiento, AICP

"Neighborhoods First" Training Seminar:

Planning, Research and Development conducted a training seminar as part of the Neighborhoods First Program on April 19, 2004. Forty interested residents were in attendance.

The program is designed to provide registered neighborhood groups with a forum to address citywide neighborhood organization issues at City Hall. It is intended to provide them with an opportunity to learn to use the tools needed to affect neighborhood change.

The Long Range Planning Division is conducting the seminars as part of the on-going Neighborhood Planning effort. Upcoming topics include definitions and procedures for changing zoning, subdividing land, dedicating and maintaining city streets, and utility easement identification. If dates, times, and locations for future seminars are needed, or to share ideas for future seminars, contact Verónica Rosales at 541-4633.

Mayor and City Council Name New Neighborhood Initiatives Liaison:

On Tuesday, April 27th, the El Paso City Council approved the appointment of Mr. Mark Alvarado as the new Neighborhoods Initiatives Liaison for the City. This note is to introduce Mr. Alvarado to the citywide network of neighborhood association board members and to reiterate the City's commitment to having neighborhoods engaged in the civic process.

The neighborhood recognition ordinance, approved by City Council on December 2003, has contributed greatly to the formation of new neighborhood groups and to awareness of issues affecting their communities. On April 27, 2004, City Council passed an ordinance to have applicants erect signs on properties of more than one acre in size where a petition for rezoning has been made to the City. This complements current notification practices, which include direct mail to property owners, residents and neighborhood associations and the advertising of public hearings at City Council in the local newspaper.

Please extend a warm welcome to Mr. Alvarado as he fills this vital position in the Neighborhoods First program. His profile includes expertise in community building, education and training, and volunteerism. His direct responsibilities will include planning, organizing, and coordinating service delivery methods as well as assisting in the development of citizen leadership initiatives and committees that engage in neighborhood self-help activities. Mr. Alvarado will provide technical guidance to neighborhood groups as requested and more notably optimize the City's capabilities to meet diverse neighborhood needs.

Mr. Alvarado will assume his new position on May 14, 2004 and will work alongside our team of neighborhood experts in the Planning, Research & Development Department while reporting directly to the Office of the Mayor.



Neighborhood and Transportation Planning:

Neighborhood and transportation planners on staff are responsible for long-range planning in the various Planning Areas, which include Central, Northwest, Northeast, East and Lower Valley. In the first quarter 2004, we have seen activity in both the Central and Northwest Planning Areas.

City Council approved the Upper Valley Plan, which is within the Northwest Planning Area, in January 2004. The Plan included recommendations for future growth and its policies for development and zoning were used to amend the Plan for El Paso (Planning, 1999).

The Chihuahuita Neighborhood Plan is the first in a series of plans with real grassroots connection to the residents. Adopted in March 2004, the Plan represents the opinions, needs and concerns of the people most affected by its findings and recommendations. Several other Neighborhood Plans are in the process of being developed. Montoya Heights and Five Points are on the horizon for completion.

Transportation planners work with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) to provide sufficient roadways for the City of El Paso. The MPO maintains the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) that details the financing and schedules for each project. The City's thoroughfare plan comes into play during the subdivision process when major roadways must connect between developments. This past quarter, our transportation planners have lent their expertise in the Upper Valley, measuring travel demand for the Gomez-Redd Road proposed connection to Interstate 10, Stanton Street – Arterial One connection to Mesa Street and Interstate 10, and Riverbend Road connection to Frontera. Recommendations have been made and decisions by the City Plan Commission and City Council are pending.



Chihuahuita Resident's Meeting

Mesa – Cincinnati Street Improvements:

Pedestrian hazards and traffic congestion at Cincinnati and Stanton Streets led to a special parking study for the popular commercial area. With the direction from the Mayor's office, various city departments including Planning, Engineering, Streets, Sun Metro, the Goodman Corporation and the Texas Department of Transportation, with input from businesses, property owners and residents, formulated short, medium and long-term strategies to address congestion, pedestrian safety, and neighborhood design issues. The results of the effort included a recommendation to build a multi-story parking garage with pedestrian overpass over Mesa Street, on University of Texas at El Paso property. The site will include a 10,000 sq.ft. daycare facility, 8,000 sq.ft. of retail space, a new 5,000 sq.ft. ticket sales center, a 550-space parking garage, and a Sun Metro Transit Terminal. Construction will take 30 months to complete at a cost of \$8.1 million.



Site of Proposed Shared Parking Facility



Mesa - Cincinnati Street Study

\$40 Million Available from the Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation:

The Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation (TSAHC) is offering \$40 Million of private activity bond financing to multifamily developers that supply affordable rental units to eligible tenants. Target areas for 2004 include El Paso, Corpus Christi, San Antonio, and McAllen. The goal is provision of safe, decent, and affordable rental housing to residents of Texas.

Eligible facilities for financing include acquisition and rehabilitation, or new construction. TSAHC's website contains additional information concerning qualifications, development / location criteria, and application guidelines.

The TSAHC is requesting proposals (RFP) from qualified individuals and/or firms interested in working with the Corporation and with the City of El Paso, Texas for the development and construction of an affordable multifamily apartment complex, using private activity bonds and low income housing tax credits.

Application Deadline: Submissions are due by not later than 2:00 P.M. Central Standard Time, Friday, May 21, 2004.

**Questions about the RFP can be directed to:**

Katherine Closmann
Vice President
Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation
1005 Congress Avenue, Suite 500
Austin, Texas 78701
Telephone (512) 477-3555, Ext. 424
Fax (512) 477-3557
Email: kclosmann@tsahc.org
Web Site (www.tsahc.org)

Transportation Issues:

In response to requests received by the City Council, neighborhood groups and landowners, our transportation planners analyzed the potential effects of amending the City of El Paso's Major Thoroughfare Plan (MTP) at four different locations. The locations include Gomez/Redd Road, Riverbend Drive, Billy the Kid Street and a totally new road called Arterial 1. All were given well thought-out review and analysis with the help of technical experts from other city departments and outside agencies.

The Long Range Planning division developed planning recommendations for the Development Coordinating Committee (DCC) which pass on its recommendation to the City Plan Commission (CPC) and City Council for consideration in the decision-making process. The department has also adopted the same public outreach process that would be used in other instances such as amendments to the long range plan, The Plan for El Paso, and land development cases.



Example of proposed traffic volume modeling map used in Planning.




Geographic Information Mapping and Database Activities:

The Planning Department continues to update the City of El Paso's Official Zoning Map. Rezoning and new subdivisions are being made to both mylar map sheets and in the Geographic Information System (GIS).

Technicians in the department, in conjunction with the GIS unit, are working diligently to make digital maps a reality. Hundreds of hours are being invested in the hopes of making the leap from pen-and-ink cartography to GIS mapping. In addition to attaching the Central Appraisal District's (CAD) property ownership records to each parcel, zoning, subdivision name, and special contract conditions will also be available in a single digital database.

Computerized ownership research continues to save hours of manual work. As the process is adopted as part of our everyday routine, more and more layers of information are being added which promise greater efficiency and accuracy of our information. Data Management and Support Services staff has created "how-to" manuals so that more staff personnel will be able to use this timesaving procedure. To enhance public service, a computer has been located at the front counter of the Department. The technical staff is prepared to answer questions, both general and specific, for all phases of land development.



Park and Open Space:

Dr. Norman Merrifield has accepted the position of Director for the Parks and Recreation Department. The Park Plan update will continue to be a priority. As technical support to the Parks Department, Data Management staff has assisted with population projections, parks needs, and the gathering of park information by Planning Area, Park Maintenance Area, and Representative District.

Assistance to the Economic Development Department:

This quarter, Database Management has been involved with several projects related to the Economic Development Department. Texas Street Property Owners Association needed technical data and mapping for their development concept. Research was conducted for location options of a Farmers Market in the Central City. Similar research and mapping was requested for potential sites for construction of a new City Fairgrounds Complex.

Development and Growth Management Activities:

The Land Development Division continues to provide a procedure and means to change the configuration or use of land within El Paso's city limits. Zoning, special contract conditions, subdivisions, and other planning changes are processed through the various review bodies such as the City Plan Commission, Historic Landmark Commission and Mountain Committee and approved by our elected officials at City Council meetings.

The most recent development challenge has occurred within El Paso's Upper Valley. Opposing points of view concerning the most effective development densities for the former agricultural land have been presented and a healthy dialogue between developers and neighborhood groups has resulted. While subdivision activity continues throughout the City, East El Paso is still the fastest growing part of El Paso. The City Council has also voiced its concern about maintaining a balanced approach toward development to accommodate the growing demand for a wide range of housing types and improving quality of life, while setting a solid foundation to attract future investment and employment to the City of El Paso.



Upper Valley Study Area Location Map



Sample of Rezoning the Upper Valley

Several tables of data have been developed to give our readers a quick reference to see how development is proceeding:

Rezoning Cases Submitted in 2004:

	Jan-Mar 2004
Development Coordination Committee (DCC)	
Approval Recommendation	9
Denial Recommendation	1
Withdrawn Prior to DCC Review	1
Pending	2
Total Cases Reviewed by DCC	11
City Plan Commission (CPC)	
Approval Recommendation	9
Denial Recommendation	1
Withdrawn prior to CPC Review	1
Pending	2
Total Cases Reviewed by CPC	11

Subdivision Platting Activity in 2004:

	Jan-Mar 2004
Subdivisions Recorded	18
Dwelling Units Recorded	854
Acres Recorded	297.84
Pending	68

Detailed Site Development Plans Submitted in 2004:Jan-Mar
2004**Development Coordinating
Committee (DCC)**

Approval Recommendation	5
Denial Recommendation	0
Withdrawn Prior to DCC Review	0
Pending	3
Total Cases Reviewed by DCC	5

City Plan Commission (CPC)

Approval Recommendation	3
Denial Recommendation	0
Withdrawn prior to CPC Review	0
Pending	5
Total Cases Reviewed by CPC	3

Special Permit Cases Submitted in 2004:Jan-Mar
2004**Development Coordinating
Committee (DCC)**

Approval Recommendation	7
Denial Recommendation	2
Withdrawn Prior to DCC Review	1
Pending	7
Total Cases Reviewed by DCC	8

City Plan Commission (CPC)

Approval Recommendation	7
Denial Recommendation	0
Withdrawn prior to CPC Review	0
Pending	10
Total Cases Reviewed by CPC	7



Zoning Amendment / Releases Submitted in 2004:Jan-Mar
2004**Development Coordinating
Committee (DCC)**

Approval Recommendation	3
Denial Recommendation	0
Withdrawn Prior to DCC Review	0
Pending	0
Total Cases Reviewed by DCC	3

City Plan Commission (CPC)

Approval Recommendation	2
Denial Recommendation	0
Withdrawn prior to CPC Review	0
Pending	1
Total Cases Reviewed by CPC	2

Rezoning Cases Submitted in 2004:Jan-Mar
2004**Development Coordinating
Committee (DCC)**

Approval Recommendation	9
Denial Recommendation	1
Withdrawn Prior to DCC Review	1
Pending	2
Total Cases Reviewed by DCC	11

City Plan Commission (CPC)

Approval Recommendation	9
Denial Recommendation	1
Withdrawn prior to CPC Review	1
Pending	2
Total Cases Reviewed by CPC	11

Historic Preservation Cases Submitted in 2004:

Historic District	Jan-Mar 2004	
	Certificates of Appropriateness	Administrative Review Approval
Austin Terrace	0	5
Chihuahuita	0	1
Downtown	1	0
Magoffin	0	2
Manhattan Heights	1	5
Old San Francisco	0	0
Sunset Heights	0	19
Ysleta	1	1
Mission Trail	0	0
Independent	0	0
Total	3	33

A Quick Look At El Paso's Demographics:**Population estimate for January, 2004:**

City of El Paso:	594,054
Remainder of El Paso County:	123,157
Total for City and County:	717,211
Ciudad Juarez, Mexico:	<u>1,325,211</u>
Total for the Metro Area:	2,042,298

Source: City of El Paso, Planning, Research and Development

Total Square Miles of Area:

City:	251.1
County:	1058

Source: City of El Paso, Planning, Research and Development

Sunny Days with Clear Sky: 202 per year**Top Employers in El Paso (2003):**

Independent School Districts	19,158
El Paso	8,663
Ysleta	6,500
Socorro	3,995
Fort Bliss, Civilian	6,620
City of El Paso	6,264
UTEP	4,871
Sierra Providence Health	3,761
El Paso Community College	3,728
Wal-Mart	3,706
County of El Paso	2,700

Source: City of El Paso, Economic Development Department

County Civilian Labor Force March 2004: 295,000**Unemployment in March 2004:** 7.8%

Source: Texas Labor Market Review

All Bridge Crossings: Jan-Feb 2004

Trains:	107
Trucks:	116,750
Buses:	4,641
Cars:	2,473,714
Pedestrians:	1,314,860

Source: U.S. Customs Service

City-wide estimate methodology includes Age Cohort Survival Projections, in cooperation with the Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Population estimates, at the Census Tract level, rely on extrapolation techniques based on Building Permit / Certificates of Occupancy activity

and Births / Deaths information modified specifically for El Paso County.

Helpful Telephone Numbers:

<u>Activity:</u>	<u>Telephone:</u>	<u>Activity:</u>	<u>Telephone:</u>
Main Office	541-4024	Long Range Planning	541-4633
Director	541-4193	Neighborhoods First	541-4918
Database & Support	541-4718	Neighborhood Planners	
Demographics	541-4721	Northeast	541-4930
Historic Preservation	541-4723	Northwest	541-4730
Land Development	541-4635	Central	541-4932
Zoning	541-4925	East	541-4192
Subdivisions	541-4903	Lower Valley	541-4502
Addresses	541-4936	Thoroughfares	541-4632
ZBA	541-4027		

Community Calendar: April – June 2004**Neighborhood Association and Civic Meeting Calendar:****City-Wide Events**

April 30: Neighborhood Information Fair: Guillen Middle School, 1:00-6:00 PM

May 12: Neighborhood Association President's Forum, Empowerment Zone, Office of Neighborhood and Business Coordination. 1444 Montana, Suite 100, Ruby Diaz, 313-0162

May 15: Community Work Day. Rio Bosque Park, 9 AM

May 17: Neighborhoods First Seminar, 3rd Floor Conference Room, 6:00 PM, 541-4633

May 18: How to Conduct a Meeting, Empowerment Zone, Office of Neighborhood and Business Coordination. 1444 Montana, Suite 100, Ruby Diaz, 313-0162

May 29: Paso del Norte Health Foundation: Cycling Ride and Workshop, 7 AM – 3 PM, UTEP, UGLC Building

June 2: Successful Membership Drives, Empowerment Zone, Office of Neighborhood and Business Coordination, 1444 Montana, Suite 100, Ruby Diaz, 313-0162

June 19: Community Work Day, Rio Bosque Park, 9:00 AM

June 12: Birding Tour, Rio Bosque Park, 4:00 PM

May 3: Chihuahueta Neighborhood Assn., Chihuahueta Community Center, 6:00 PM, 541-4932

Central Planning Area:

May 6: Central Business Assn., Chase Bank, 6th Floor, 7:00 AM, 541-4932
May 8: Sunset Heights Neighborhood Assn., 525 Corto, 9:00 AM, 541-4932
May 8: El Paso High Assn., UTEP Health Science Bldg, 9:00 AM, 541-4932
May 12: Five Points Neighborhood Assn., Memorial Park Senior Cntr., 5:30 PM, 541-4930
May 20: Rim Road / University Assn., El Paso Tennis Club, 7:00 PM, 541-4932
May 20: Estrella Neighborhood Assn., 2201 San Antonio, 6:00 PM, 541-4932
May 22: El Paso High Assn., UTEP Health Science Bldg, 9:00 AM, 541-4932
May 25: Golden Hills Neighborhood Assn., Good Coffee, 6:00 PM, 541-4932
May 25: San Juan Neighborhood Assn., San Juan Church Hall, 6:00 PM, 541-4932

June 2: Chihuahueta Neighborhood Assn., Chihuahueta Community Center, 6:00 PM, 541-4932
June 3: Central Business Assn., Chase Bank, 6th Floor, 7:00 AM, 541-4932
June 9: Five Points Neighborhood Assn., Memorial Park Senior Ctr., 5:30 PM, 541-4930
June 12: Sunset Heights Neighborhood Assn., 525 Corto, 9:00 AM, 541-4932
June 17: Estrella Neighborhood Assn., 2201 San Antonio, 6:00 PM, 541-4932
June 29: Golden Hills Neighborhood Assn., Good Coffee, 6:00 PM, 541-4932
June 29: San Juan Neighborhood Assn., San Juan Church Hall, 6:00 PM, 541-4932

Lower Valley Planning Area:

May 3: El Paso Lower Valley Assn., Cedar Grove Elem. School, 7:00 PM, 541-4502
May 6: Valle Bajo Neighborhood Assn., Ysleta Lutheran Church, 6:00 PM, 541-4502
May 18: Thomas Manor Neighborhood Assn., Thomas Manor Elementary School, 7:00 PM, 541-4502
June 3: Valle Bajo Neighborhood Assn., Ysleta Lutheran Church, 6:00 PM, 541-450
June 15: Thomas Manor Neighborhood Assn., Thomas Manor Elementary School, 7:00 PM, 541-4502

Northwest Planning Area:

May 4: Zach White Neighborhood Assn., Zach White School, 6:00 PM, 541-4192
May 4: Borderland Neighborhood Assn., 6352 Doniphan, 6:30 PM, 541-4730
May 31: Montoya Heights Improvement Assn., St. Francis Church, 6:00 PM, 541-4730
June 4: Borderland Neighborhood Assn., 6352 Doniphan, 6:30 PM, 541-4730

Northeast Planning Area:

May 20: Northeast Healthy Communities, 8888 Dyer, 6:30 PM, 541-4930
May 27: North Hills Neighborhood Pride, Nolan Richardson Middle School, 6:00 PM, 541-4930
June 24: North Hills Neighborhood Pride, Nolan Richardson Middle School,

Planning Department Boards and Commissions Calendar:

Historic Landmark Commission, Council Chambers, 4:00 PM, 541-4024

Meets on: May 3, May 17, May 21, June 7, and June 21

City Plan Commission, Council Chambers, 1:30 PM, 541-4024

Meets on: May 6, May 20, June 3, and June 17

Zoning Board of Adjustment, Council Chambers, 1:30 PM, 541-4024

Meets on: May 10, May 24, June 14, and June 28

Mountain Committee, Planning Conf. Room, 2nd Floor, 2:00 PM, 541-4024

Meets on: May 21 AND June 18

